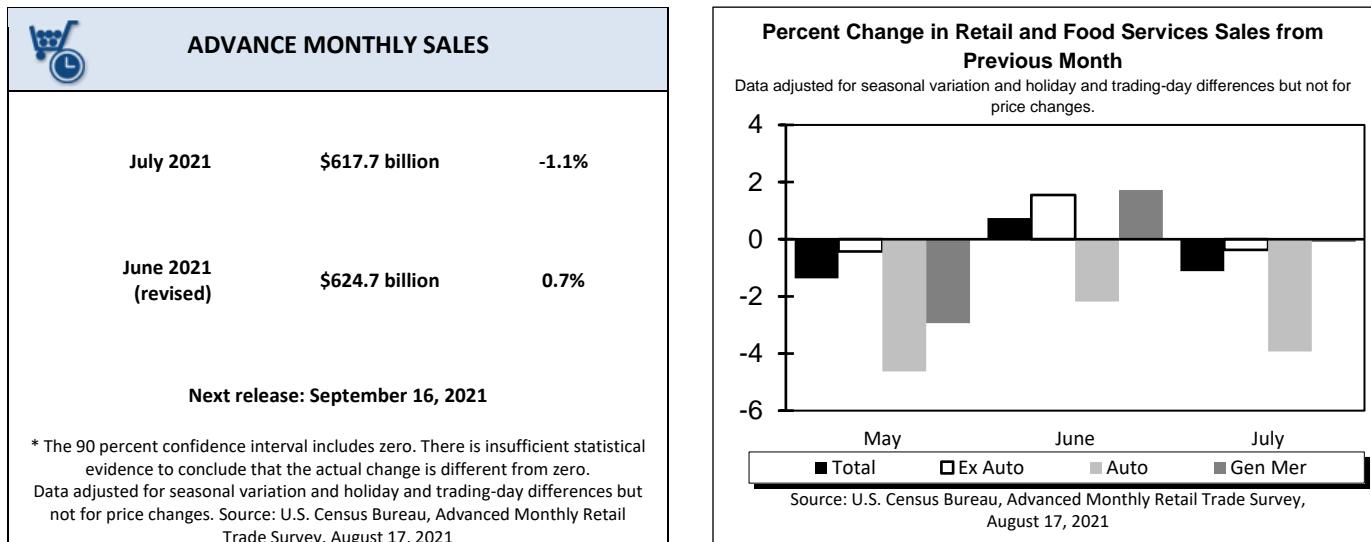


FOR RELEASE AT 8:30 AM EDT, TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2021

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, JULY 2021

Release Number: CB21-124

August 17, 2021 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for July 2021:



Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for July 2021, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$617.7 billion, a decrease of 1.1 percent (± 0.5 percent) from the previous month, but 15.8 percent (± 0.7 percent) above July 2020. Total sales for the May 2021 through July 2021 period were up 20.6 percent (± 0.5 percent) from the same period a year ago. The May 2021 to June 2021 percent change was revised from up 0.6 percent (± 0.5 percent) to up 0.7 percent (± 0.2 percent).

Retail trade sales were down 1.5 percent (± 0.5 percent) from June 2021, but up 13.3 percent (± 0.7 percent) above last year. Clothing and clothing accessories stores were up 43.4 percent (± 2.8 percent) from July 2020, while food services and drinking places were up 38.4 percent (± 3.0 percent) from last year.

General Information

The August 2021 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on September 16, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. EDT. View the full schedule in the Economic Briefing Room: <www.census.gov/economic-indicators/>. The full text and tables of this release can be found at <www.census.gov/retail/>.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Census Bureau's full retail and food services sample. A stratified random sampling method is used to select approximately 5,500 retail and food services firms whose sales are then weighted and benchmarked to represent the complete universe of over three million retail and food services firms.

Survey Description

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade and Food Services Survey to provide an early estimate of monthly sales by kind of business for retail and food service firms located in the United States. Each month, questionnaires are mailed to a probability sample of approximately 5,500 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey. Advance sales estimates are computed using a link relative estimator. For each detailed industry, we compute a ratio of current-to-previous month weighted sales using data from units for which we have obtained usable responses for both the current and previous month. For each detailed industry, the advance total sales estimates for the current month is computed by multiplying this ratio by the preliminary sales estimate for the previous month (derived from the larger MRTS) at the appropriate industry level. Total estimates for broader industries are computed as the sum of the detailed industry estimates. The link relative estimate is used because imputation is not performed for most nonrespondents in MRTS. For a limited number of nonresponding companies that have influential effects on the estimates, sales may be estimated based on historical performance of that company. The monthly estimates are benchmarked to the annual survey estimates from the Annual Retail Trade Survey once available. The estimates are adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading day differences. Additional information on MRTS and MRTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at: <www.census.gov/retail>.

Reliability of Estimates

Because the estimates presented in this report are based on a sample survey, they contain sampling error and nonsampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between the estimate and the result that would be obtained from a complete enumeration of the sampling frame conducted under the same survey conditions. This error occurs because only a subset of the entire sampling frame is measured in a sample survey. Standard errors and coefficients of variation (CV), as given in Table 3 of this report, are estimated measures of sampling variation.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the percent change estimate is +1.2 percent and its estimated

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standard error is 0.9 percent, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.753 \times 0.9$ percent or ± 1.6 percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is –0.4 percent to +2.8 percent. If the interval contains 0, then one does not have sufficient evidence to conclude at the 90 percent confidence level that the change is different from zero and therefore the change is not statistically significant. Estimated changes shown in the text are statistically significant unless otherwise noted. For a monthly total, the median estimated coefficient of variation is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.753 \times CV \times$ (the estimated monthly total). The Census Bureau recommends that individuals using estimates in this report incorporate this information into their analyses, as sampling error could affect the conclusions drawn from the estimates.

Nonsampling error encompasses all other factors that contribute to the total error of a sample survey estimate. This type of error can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, and other errors of collection, response, coverage, or processing. Although nonsampling error is not measured directly, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the process to minimize this type of error.

Statement Regarding COVID-19 Impact

The Census Bureau continues to monitor response and data quality and has determined that estimates in this release meet publication standards. For more information, see [COVID-19 FAQs](#).

Weather Information

For information on the impact of weather events on the compilation of this report, please see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on our website at:

[<www.census.gov/retail/marts_weather_faqs.html>](http://www.census.gov/retail/marts_weather_faqs.html)

RESOURCES

The Rest of the Consumer Spending Story

Retail and services together represent what's commonly referred to as consumer spending. Quarterly Services Survey (QSS) revenue comprises roughly 2/3 of the personal consumption expenditures component of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measured by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The second quarter 2021 Advance Quarterly Services Report will be available on August 19, 2021 at 10:00 AM. Learn about historical revenue trends for certain industries going back 15 years and other data, such as in-patient days and discharges for hospitals, by visiting <<https://www.census.gov/services/index.html>>

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API

The Census Bureau's application programming interface lets developers create custom apps to reach new users and makes key demographic, socio-economic and housing statistics more accessible than ever before. <www.census.gov/developers/>

FRED Mobile App



Receive the latest updates on the nation's key economic indicators by downloading the FRED App <<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/fred-mobile/>> for both Apple and Android devices. FRED, the signature database of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, now incorporates the Census Bureau's 13 economic indicators.

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* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. There is insufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.

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Table 1. Estimated Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Total sales estimates are shown in millions of dollars and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS ¹ code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted ²				
		7 Month Total		2021			2020		2021			2020	
		2021	% Chg. 2020	Jul. ³ (a)	Jun. (p)	May (r)	Jul.	Jun.	Jul. ³ (a)	Jun. (p)	May (r)	Jul. (r)	
441 4411, 4412 44111 4413 442 4421 4422 443 444 4441 445 4451 4453 446 44611 447 448 44811 44812 44814 4482 451 452 4521 4529 45291 45299 453 454 4541 722	Retail & food services, total	4,181,079	21.9	636,980	634,630	643,099	549,416	532,678	617,719	624,731	620,119	533,522	526,187
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	3,268,780	18.9	502,640	497,470	500,389	433,183	418,450	490,987	492,817	485,272	423,979	415,613
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	3,858,780	21.1	583,287	583,347	592,919	510,540	496,364	568,232	576,396	573,483	497,526	491,896
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	2,946,481	17.6	448,947	446,187	450,209	394,307	382,136	441,500	444,482	438,636	387,983	381,322
	Retail	3,723,631	20.9	560,286	562,209	570,641	494,905	481,205	545,502	553,730	550,781	481,358	475,723
	GAFO ⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	123,907	126,686	106,664	102,574	(*)	127,443	125,386	107,059	105,746
	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	912,299	34.0	134,340	137,160	142,710	116,233	114,228	126,732	131,914	134,847	109,543	110,574
	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	847,935	35.7	124,510	127,437	133,232	107,082	104,941	117,352	122,654	125,454	100,926	101,687
	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	100,009	105,868	84,691	81,593	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,723	9,478	9,151	9,287	(*)	9,260	9,393	8,617	8,887
442 4421 4422	Furniture & home furn. stores	81,754	38.5	12,282	11,936	12,151	10,625	9,993	11,947	12,020	12,286	10,336	10,104
	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,475	6,796	5,957	5,730	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	4,668	4,263	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	52,230	34.8	8,091	7,990	7,594	6,555	5,608	8,626	8,601	8,228	6,981	6,004
	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	285,343	16.4	41,533	45,428	46,920	39,430	42,092	38,615	39,085	39,648	35,933	36,366
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	39,534	40,129	34,870	36,397	(*)	34,052	34,804	31,246	31,540
445 4451 4453	Food & beverage stores.....	510,222	1.7	77,231	74,788	76,383	75,085	71,799	74,409	74,971	74,349	72,717	72,511
	Grocery stores	455,422	0.7	68,690	66,431	68,015	66,892	63,973	66,367	66,631	66,098	64,944	64,685
	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,050	6,084	6,106	5,780	(*)	6,026	5,976	5,701	5,757
446 44611	Health & personal care stores	217,552	10.2	32,046	32,370	31,169	29,573	28,279	32,567	32,533	31,138	29,811	28,336
	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	27,309	26,377	25,460	24,655	(*)	27,725	26,351	25,691	24,954
447	Gasoline stations	322,299	31.6	53,693	51,283	50,180	38,876	36,314	49,487	48,335	46,636	35,996	34,291
	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	157,849	70.0	25,930	25,338	26,503	17,779	16,442	25,839	26,527	25,586	18,024	17,361
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	652	713	405	303	(*)	676	642	453	313
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,282	3,381	2,373	2,027	(*)	3,312	3,175	2,383	2,070
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,170	10,311	7,077	6,955	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,333	3,587	2,722	2,692	(*)	3,490	3,459	2,620	2,882
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	59,797	39.0	9,172	9,306	8,912	8,011	8,390	9,227	9,410	9,583	8,108	8,552
	General merchandise stores.....	454,866	10.5	69,298	67,014	69,330	61,674	60,501	68,480	68,551	67,394	61,729	62,024
4521	Department stores	71,204	21.0	11,625	11,253	11,254	9,384	9,047	12,070	12,112	11,456	9,714	9,750
4529	Other general merch. stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	55,761	58,076	52,290	51,454	(*)	56,439	55,938	52,015	52,274
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	47,797	49,526	44,706	43,615	(*)	48,427	47,621	44,439	44,324
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,964	8,550	7,584	7,839	(*)	8,012	8,317	7,576	7,950
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	92,398	30.2	14,654	14,440	14,367	11,992	11,544	14,172	13,692	13,169	11,544	11,000
	Nonstore retailers	577,022	16.9	82,016	85,156	84,422	79,072	76,015	85,401	88,091	87,917	80,636	78,600
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	77,175	76,293	72,123	69,954	(*)	79,235	79,142	73,073	71,895
722	Food services & drinking places	457,448	30.5	76,694	72,421	72,458	54,511	51,473	72,217	71,001	69,338	52,164	50,464

(*) Advance estimates are not available for this kind of business.

(NA) Not available (a) Advance estimate (p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(S) Estimate does not meet publication standards because of high sampling variability (coefficient of variation is greater than 30%), poor response quality

(total quantity response rate is less than 50%), or other concerns about the estimate's quality.

(1) For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see <<https://www.census.gov/naics/>>.

(2) Estimates are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variation and for holiday and trading day differences, but not for price changes. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-13ARIMA-SEATS program. The factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted estimates shown in this table. Year-to-date seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated. Adjustment factors and explanatory material can be found on the Internet at <<http://www.census.gov/retail>>.

(3) Advance estimates are based on early reports obtained from a small sample of firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS) sample. All other estimates are from the MRTS sample.

(4) GAFO represents firms which specialize in department store types of merchandise and is comprised of furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances (443), clothing & accessories (448), sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, and book (451), general merchandise (452), office supply, stationery, and gift stores (4532).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, August 17, 2021. Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on

confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at

<www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html>.

Table 2. Estimated Change in Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change ¹					
		Jul. 2021 Advance from --		Jun. 2021 Preliminary from --		May 2021 through Jul. 2021 from --	
		Jun. 2021 (p)	Jul. 2020 (r)	May 2021 (r)	Jun. 2020 (r)	Feb. 2021 through Apr. 2021	May 2020 through Jul. 2020
	Retail & food services, total	-1.1	15.8	0.7	18.7	2.8	20.6
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	-0.4	15.8	1.6	18.6	3.5	20.1
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	-1.4	14.2	0.5	17.2	2.4	19.0
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	-0.7	13.8	1.3	16.6	3.1	17.9
	Retail	-1.5	13.3	0.5	16.4	1.4	17.7
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-3.9	15.7	-2.2	19.3	0.2	22.6
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ...	-4.3	16.3	-2.2	20.6	0.2	23.8
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-0.6	15.6	-2.2	19.0	-0.5	30.5
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.3	23.6	4.5	43.3	6.6	47.5
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	-1.2	7.5	-1.4	7.5	-5.0	8.4
445	Food & beverage stores.....	-0.7	2.3	0.8	3.4	2.3	2.2
4451	Grocery stores	-0.4	2.2	0.8	3.0	2.6	1.8
446	Health & personal care stores	0.1	9.2	4.5	14.8	2.5	14.0
447	Gasoline stations	2.4	37.5	3.6	41.0	7.4	44.6
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-2.6	43.4	3.7	52.8	11.6	78.1
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	-1.9	13.8	-1.8	10.0	1.8	20.9
452	General merchandise stores.....	-0.1	10.9	1.7	10.5	0.4	10.6
4521	Department stores	-0.3	24.3	5.7	24.2	9.8	25.6
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.5	22.8	4.0	24.5	3.2	30.5
454	Nonstore retailers	-3.1	5.9	0.2	12.1	-0.3	8.6
722	Food services & drinking places	1.7	38.4	2.4	40.7	14.7	49.4

(p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(1) Estimates shown in this table are derived from adjusted estimates provided in Table 1 of this report.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, August 17, 2021. Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability.

Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html.

Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates Jul. 2021

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey and Monthly Retail Trade Survey)

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Median CV Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.3
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.4
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.3
	Retail, total	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.4
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.4	0.8	0.6	1.3	0.4	0.7
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	1.5	0.8	0.7	1.4	0.4	0.7
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	2.9	1.0	0.8	1.6	0.4	1.0
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.6	0.7	0.6	1.1	-0.2	1.7
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	2.1	0.8	0.6	1.4	-0.2	0.7
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.7	-0.1	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.7	0.1	0.2	0.6	-0.1	0.3
446	Health & personal care stores	2.9	0.8	0.5	1.6	0.1	0.6
447	Gasoline stations	1.2	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.3	0.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.9	0.9	1.1	1.6	0.9	1.1
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	2.9	0.8	0.9	1.9	0.6	1.1
452	General merchandise stores.....	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6	0.4
4521	Department stores	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	4.4	2.9	1.8	4.7	0.9	0.9
454	Nonstore retailers	1.6	0.4	0.4	1.0	-0.1	1.5
722	Food services & drinking places	3.5	1.0	0.7	1.7	0.6	0.4

(1) Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation or holiday or trading day variation. Medians are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

(2) These columns provide measures of the difference between the advance-to-preliminary and preliminary-to-final estimates of month-to-month change for the same pair of months as measured by the Advance sample and MRTS sample. The average and median revisions are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, August 17, 2021. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html>.